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*society of American
authors.*

THE AMERICAN AUTHORS' GUILD

**CONSTITUTION: BY-LAWS: ORGANIZATION:
CHARTER MEMBERS**

NEW YORK, 1894.

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A meeting to organize an Association of American Authors was held in the Berkeley Lyceum in New York City in May 1892, under the following call:

"The undersigned, believing that the interests of American authors and literature demand the organization of a society of American authors on the same general basis as the very successful English and French societies, invite you to meet at the Berkeley Lyceum at No. 23 West Forty-fourth street, New York, on May 18th, at 12 M., to organize a society of American authors, of which all literary workers, both men and women, may become members; with annual dues not exceeding five dollars, and having these general objects:

First—To promote a professional spirit among authors.

Second—To settle disputes between authors and publishers by arbitration, or by an appeal to the courts.

Third—To advise authors as to the various methods of publishing, and to see that their contracts are so drawn as to protect them in their legal rights.

Fourth—To co-operate with publishers in bringing about better business methods between author and publisher.

Fifth—To secure minor reforms, such as an extension of copyright, carriage of literary property through the mails at the same rate as other merchandise, and in general to advance the interests of American authors and literature.

Signed, William Dean Howells, George W. Cable, Thomas W. Higginson, Julian Hawthorne, Charles D. Warner, James Grant Wilson, Moncure D. Conway, Charles Burr Todd."

Gen. James Grant Wilson, in behalf of the Genealogical and Biographical Society, welcomed the members to the hall, and nominated Col. Thomas W. Higginson as chairman of the meeting, who was unanimously elected.

The following persons having signified their desire to unite in forming an Association of American Authors were accepted as incorporating members of said association:

Thomas Wentworth Higginson
James Grant Wilson
George W. Cable
Oliver Wendell Holmes
Charles Dudley Warner
John Albee
Julian Hawthorne
Edward Bellamy
William Dean Howells
James T. Bixby
Moncure D. Conway
Marshal H. Bright
James Lane Allen
Hezekiah Butterworth
Elizabeth Stuart Phelps Ward
Emily Wooden
John D. Champlin, Jr.
Henry S. Styles
Cynthia Elaise Cleveland
William L. Stone
Titus Munson Coan
Charles Burr Todd
Alban J. Conant
Moses Coit Tyler
George W. Cook
Barrett Wendell
Berthold Fernow
Horace White
Henry T. Finck
Mary E. Wilkins
Chandos Fulton

Charles F. Wingate
Robert Grant
Louise Chandler Moulton
Joel Chandler Harris
Margaret Deland
Blackburn W. Harte
Edward Everett Hale
Benjamin Hathaway
James J. Roche
William T. Hornaday
Edwin J. Mead
Julia Ward Howe
William J. Rolfe
George Parsons Lathrop
Maurice Thompson
Janet Richards
John T. White
Eugene Lawrence
William Henry Smith
William M. Griswold
Mary S. Lockwood
Adah J. Todd
Eben R. Horsford
Henry V. Boynton
Joseph Cook
James Martin
Thomas Bailey Aldrich
Josiah Royce
Mary O. Nutting
Edward W. Bok
William A. Hammond

Nora Perry
Alexander K. McClure
Howard Hinton
Wallace P. Reed
N. P. Gilman
Albert Mathews
T. R. Rodenbough
Celia Thaxter
William H. Beard
Minot J. Savage
Edward F. De Lancy
Horace E. Scudder
William C. Hudson
Nathaniel S. Shaler
Frank L. Stanton
Ella Wheeler Wilcox
John Bigelow
Brooks Adams
Arthur Gilman
James E. Bailey
Edwin L. Bynner
Mary Ires Todd
Fannie Edgar Thomas
S. Weir Mitchell
Coyne Fletcher
Henry Coppee
Emily L. Sherwood
Constance G. Du Bois
Oliver O. Howard
Daniel G. Gilman
Thomas W. Knox.

The following Constitution was then read, discussed and adopted :

CONSTITUTION

ARTICLE I

NAME

This society shall be called the Association of American Authors.

ARTICLE II

OBJECTS

The objects of this society shall be :

First—To promote a professional spirit among authors.

Second—To foster a friendlier feeling and greater confidence between authors and publishers by devising some practical means of securing accurate returns of sales by the publisher.

Third—To advise authors as to the value of literary property and the different methods of publishing, and to see that their contracts are so drawn as to secure them their rights.

Fourth—To settle disputes between authors and publishers by arbitration or by an appeal to the courts.

Fifth—To secure certain other reforms urgently needed, and in general to maintain, define and defend literary property, and advance the interests of American authors and literature.

ARTICLE III

MEMBERS

All persons engaged in recognized literary pursuits shall be eligible to membership in this society. Candidates shall be nominated by a member, shall be recommended by the Board of Managers, and shall be voted for at the first stated meeting after such nomination. A two-thirds vote of the members present shall be necessary to elect.

ARTICLE IV

OFFICERS

The officers of this society shall be a President; three Vice-Presidents, no two of whom shall be residents of the same State; a Secretary and a Treasurer. The President shall hold office for one year only and shall not be eligible to re-election until after the expiration of one year.

ARTICLE V

BOARD OF MANAGERS

The affairs of this society shall be managed by a Board of Managers, to be composed of the officers of the society and nine members to be elected at each annual meeting.

ARTICLE VI

THE PENSION FUND

All surplus moneys accruing to this society, whether from bequests, or from initiation fees and dues, shall be invested and held as a fund, the interest of which shall be expended in aiding such sick, aged or infirm members as may be found necessitous, and, in case of need, in paying their funeral expenses. This fund shall be managed by a sub-committee of three to be elected by the Board of Managers from among their own number.

ARTICLE VII

Amendments to the Constitution shall require at least one month's notice and a two-thirds vote of the members present.

BY-LAWS

I

The stated meetings of this society shall be held in New York on the first Wednesday of every month, except in June, July, August and September.

II

The meeting on the first Wednesday of October shall be an annual meeting for the election of officers, and the presenting of reports. The President may call a special meeting whenever in his judgment it is necessary. At all meetings ten members shall constitute a quorum, and three members at meetings of the Board of Managers.

III

The President shall preside at all meetings. If he is absent, one of the Vice-Presidents shall preside. None of these being present, any member may call the meeting to order and nominate a chairman *pro tem.* It shall be the duty of the President to ap-

point an Auditing Committee to examine the accounts of the society previously to every annual meeting; and to appoint, if so required by the society, any special committee.

IV

The Secretary shall keep the records of the society and a list of the members, with their places of residence; shall conduct the correspondence of the society, and print and mail to each member the minutes of each meeting of the society, and of the Board of Managers.

V

The Treasurer shall see that all fees or dues are paid; shall have charge of the moneys of the society, invest the same with the advice and consent of the Board of Managers, and present at each annual meeting, or oftener if called for, a detailed report of receipts, disbursements and of the present condition of its finances.

VI

The Board of Managers shall hear complaints of any member who may have been wronged, and if the case require it, aid such

member in securing justice. They shall appoint a sub-committee to care for the pension fund, a sub-committee to pass upon candidates for membership, and shall have the general supervision of the affairs of the society in the interval between the meetings.

VII

Each member shall pay an initiation fee of five dollars, which shall be in lieu of the first year's dues, and thereafter the annual dues shall be three dollars.

VIII

Members by paying fifty dollars shall become life-members and be exempt from further dues. Donations of five hundred dollars or over shall entitle the donor to be called a Patron of the society. Donations or bequests to the Pension Fund, or for any special object, shall not be diverted to any other purpose. Honorary members shall pay no dues.

IX

Persons not authors who are actively interested in letters, or who shall have performed some signal service to literature,

may be elected to honorary membership by a two-thirds vote of the members present at a regular meeting.

X

By-laws may be amended or suspended by a two-thirds vote of the members present at any meeting.

The chairman then appointed a committee of three to nominate officers of the society. They reported the following, who were unanimously elected :

President, Thomas Wentworth Higginson ; Vice-Presidents—Julia Ward Howe, Moncure D. Conway, Maurice Thompson ; Secretary, Charles Burr Todd ; Treasurer, James Grant Wilson.

Board of Managers—Charles Dudley Warner, George W. Cable, Moses Coit Tyler, William Henry Smith, Louise Chandler Moulton, Titus Munson Coan, Horace White, Cynthia E. Cleveland, William C. Hudson.

A vote of thanks was tendered to the Genealogical and Biographical Society for the use of its hall. The officers of the society were appointed a Committee with power to treat with the trustees of the Genealogical and Biographical Society for the use of their hall until proper rooms could be secured by the Association.

It was voted to hold a special meeting at the Berkeley Lyceum on Friday, June 3, 1892, at 5 o'clock P.M.

The meeting then adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

CHARLES BURR TODD,
Secretary.

At the meeting of January, 1894, it was voted to change the name of the society from "The Association of American Authors" to THE AMERICAN AUTHORS' GUILD.

Address in care of DR. TITUS M. COAN, 70 Fifth Avenue,
New York City.

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